INTERVIEW WITH ANORE JONES
BY ROGER KAYE DECEMBER 16, 2002

MR. KAYE: This is an Oral History interview with Anore Jones who was Anore Bucknell in 1959. It is conducted in Fairbanks, Alaska by Roger Kaye on December 16, 2002. Anore maybe we can begin with a brief biographical sketch. Maybe you could tell us where you came from and what brought you to Alaska and what you did here.

MRS. JONES: Actually, I came to Alaska when I was sixteen, after my junior year in High School in Seattle. I had grown up for six years on a small island, Waldron Island in the San Juan Islands, which are northwest of Seattle. This island had no ferry, no electricity and it was actually very pioneer type living. I used horses to farm. I also milked the cow, raised a garden and fished. I learned a lot of that. I was very tuned in to the land and farming and subsistence as a child growing up. It gave me a background of relating very closely to the land, and appreciating it. I went to Alaska a sixteen with an American Friends Service Committee work camp. It is a silent Quaker's branch. They have work camps all over the world. We went to the village of Beaver on the Yukon River. It's in the middle of the Yukon Flats. Twenty-five of us, mostly college age and up lived there for the summer and built thirteen log cabins. It was a relocation for the village because the river was wearing away their houses. That was my first Alaska experience. It was light all of the time. It was a new environment with new plants and it was really exciting. I didn't really want to go home after that. I went to the University of Alaska and started in on a special program that let people start without having finished High School. Celia Hunter was really the person who was instrumental in putting together that work camp. Hence, she was my contact in Alaska. And she was always my very dear friend and helped me get started. She was the one. She influenced me a lot, probably more that any other single person throughout my whole life, or, my time in Alaska. From that work camp, I didn't go home. Actually, after the work camp, nine of us loved it so much we really didn't want to just jump on a plane and fly back. So with the help of the villagers in Beaver and their equipment, we put together a log raft and floated down the Yukon; two hundred and fifty miles to Tanana. We gave the logs to the Indian Chief there and flew back to Fairbanks. It was an incredible trip to see the wilderness of Alaska. My start was in a native village learning as fast as I could, in three months, about the subsistence, food and lifestyle there. Then I was traveling through this wilderness, the Yukon travels through Rampart. We were camping. My picture of Alaska was quite different. And again, I didn't want to go home so I started at the University in Biology. The next summer, I worked with Celia and Jenny at Camp Denali. There was a lot of influence there. I was definitely biased on their side in first of all their camp spirit in trying to let people enjoy the wilderness by traveling there and seeing it. This was the spirit of Camp Denali. Out of this was growing the budding consciousness of needing conservation awareness. That's what they were trying to teach at camp. They and Les and Terry Garrett and Fred Dean and quite a few others, and us students in the Biology Lab we'd take our lunches and sit around a table in one room and talk and

visit. That's how the concept of the Alaska Conservation Society formed and actually began. There was a lot of very strong feeling about saving the wilderness, and appreciating it in the first place, and saving it from the atrocities that seemed to be happening all of the time right close at hand in Alaska. In the news in Alaska and around the world it was shocking that people has so little sensitivity. And with the energy of the era, or time, we were indignant. We were incensed. We were highly motivated to take action and try to do something about it, on whichever front [we could]. Most or many of us in the group that I was with were also into getting out and camping, hiking and going mountain climbing and skiing. We were really quite comfortable in getting far out, and away just like it's your own backyard. It's a very different feeling that unfortunately a lot of people don't share because when they get away from civilization like roads, phones, cars and houses they have a fear. It needs to be tamed. It's not a friendly thing. We were seeing the wilderness, and we were comfortable in it. We also saw; it's always been very important in my life, and continues to be; the cycle, I mean the interconnectedness of everything. The interconnectedness meaning the soil that grows the plants that feed the animals, and all of which may feed us. The water cycle and pollution and the lack of it. The health of the land and the plants and the people and the intense interconnectedness in a million ways of directions and levels has always been a big theme of mine. Since Waldron and since everything that's happened in my life, it's just very interconnected. And I think a lot of people miss that sense of how interconnected it is. I remember a very intense argument with on of my professors about that back in those days when Biology was taught as studying discreet things as if they were the truth to themselves, as systems and individuals. I was really arguing that it was worthless to study this animal unless you studied it in its whole context through time. I mean everything was related. And, as it turns out, I have to proudly point out; in the forty years since then, I was right. It has become more and more obvious that it is all interconnected. I was just able to feel it sooner. That's what prompted taking action and trying to do anything possible; stand up and testify, write letters, talk to everybody in any direction to try and influence saving the health of the wilderness and it's ecosystems because of the interconnectedness. And ultimately, it's all connected to each of us because the health of this ecosystem we live in determines our health. It is so direct. Since then, the next summer after that winter when I testified I went up north and worked on the Cape Thompson Project. That was just a continuation of fighting for preserving the Arctic Wildlife Range from oil. Way back then, it was obvious; the negative and evil influence of oil was having in our world. It's only continued to grow. We were acutely aware of it long before it was an issue. Even today, it's continued to be an issue. We need to get away from the world exploitation, on so many levels. We need to not be dependent on oil and there are so many other solutions. The next summer I was employed up north in [sounds like] Temilina north of Point Hope in [unintelligible] in the Cape Thompson Project.

MR. KAYE: What year was that?

MRS. JONES: It was the summer of 1960. That was just a continuation, only it was a real battle. It was very serious. I worked with Les and Terry Garret and Les lost his job over it. Les and I spent the summer talking about the ethics of science. That was some very acute training I had about the ethics and principals. He lost his job because he wouldn't budge on his ethics. In reporting, and doing science for pure science as apposed to doing paid science, where you were paid to get a certain answer because someone wanted you to support their theory. That was the lesson of that Project Chariot [?] The University was paying us to give the answers that they wanted. They didn't want us to give them the truth and we were fighting it. The Firecracker Boys, a book, talks about that. That was the summer of 1960. In 1961 and 1962 during the summers I was in Colorado. I was assisting Joan Foote, doing her Master's thesis in the Needles. We spent six weeks camping out in the Needles. Then I had the opportunity to work with Dr. John Maher [?] doing an undergraduate research project. They were giving undergraduates a research project to work on. I studied the downward migration of tree islands, the wind and Alpine tree islands that grew layers and grew downwind. I did some climbing. And again, I was pretty well insulated in my own group that was fervent about ecological issues. But then 1962, during the spring before the second summer in Colorado six of us climbed Mount McKinley. We did it by skiing through Park for a week and then climbing up [name] Glacier, up the Carson's ridge route, which hadn't climbed since the glacier had surged. This broke the old trail up there. The trail had been smooth ice and after the surge it was very broken up glacier, which we were barely able to find a way through, with all the crevasses from when the glacier dropped. That was another wonderful experience that took six weeks. Just spending time out in the natural world, the wilderness, and feeling comfortable and completely at home just like it's a back yard. You get a sense of peace, and rightness, and wholeness and satisfaction from being at home with the land, or in that case, the ice for six weeks. I would wish it for the whole world. It seems like a human ought to have that by rights, as opposed to the chaos and political problems that are in the news every day, throughout time it seems like. There is enough space for us to have that. After that, in 1963 I was really just disgusted with the way that science dissected everything up and studied it with an agenda instead of seeing the overall picture. That's when I was going with Keith. We met climbing in 1962. And that's when we dropped out of school and went to Kobuk. We went up there assisting John Henshaw on a Caribou survey. He was studying the pressure it took; I forget exactly, but it was something about the Caribou tracks and ice hardness. It was an obscure piece of science. It was the kind of stuff that was disgusting as far as the value of it. We went up with him and camped and worked on that. He left when his project was finished and we just stayed. One day, one month, and one year led to the next. It wasn't planned, but it's just the way life evolved. We built a sod igloo for the first winter and several winters after that. We lived the winter and did subsistence living. It was all consuming in the fascination and the effort that it took. The fascination to learn it and do it and the effort it took. We'd work enough to get the minimal requirement of food and materials that we needed to live. We also tried to, we were traveling, sort of playing with the old Eskimo style of, they would move from one food

source to the next. We lived up in Ambler for the winters, where there was fuel. And we moved down to [sounds like] Coskabu for the summer to work and commercial fish. We did some spring and fall camps, which again, were following the food. We'd move out of the winter camp, at Ambler in April by sled and go out and camp over breakup. Then we'd come back and go to Coskabu for the summer season and return. Then we'd go to a fall camp for ice fishing. It was a lot of moving and packing and moving and packing. And traveling, even with our modern gear, it was a lot of work. It was an interesting lifestyle. Even through the time we were raising two daughters, we were camping and traveling. It was pretty neat in a lot of ways. Of course the last sixteen years have been here in southern California. But there was about twenty-three years in the Kobuk.

MR. KAYE: What year did you leave Ambler?

MRS. JONES: We left Ambler in 1986. We had twenty-three years up there, and five years in Fairbanks.

MR. KAYE: And you live in California now?

MRS. JONES: Right, now we are care taking a ranch in the Sierras with some horses, cattle and fifty some goats.

MR. KAYE: O.K. well, lets move on to the Arctic Refuge. I am interested in what motivated people like you who worked to help establish the Refuge. I know that you offered statements at the Congressional or Senate Hearings here in Fairbanks, as many others did. The question is; Why did you get involved and was it a motivation to go and visit the area as a recreationist, or was there some other motivation for you?

MRS. JONES: Again, I guess I jumped from history into sort of the whole thing. I had hoped, vague hopes perhaps to visit there along with hundreds of other places, but the real reason was this sense that we have to preserve the natural world for many reasons. There are two main reasons. One being it's been running forever, by itself, taking care of itself, doing just fine and we'd best just leave it do that without messing it up. And the reason we need this natural world, the wilderness, the land, the ocean, is because it's our life support on this Earth. What supports our lives the best is the wisdom of biology running as it's done for millennia because it's doing it right. It is trial and selection and man cannot improve on that. I guess it is seeing beyond the foolishness that man can fix things better. We need to protect this because it's our support. We need to protect the natural ecosystem. And everything is so interconnected that protecting the Arctic Wildlife Range is in many ways saving our health and our sanity as humans. That's protecting every little bit from being exploited and changed and civilized and having people that move in and pollute and displace the animals. I guess the pollution has always been a big thing. I cannot stand the way humanity pollutes the earth that feeds it. That, in a nutshell, is important.

MR. KAYE: In your testimony, you stated, and I'll just quote you here you talked about this golden opportunity to preserve what was described as virgin ecological balance of this land. You were referring to the proposed Arctic Refuge here. Was ecological thought on this idea of natural processes prominent in this small group that you had, that you got together in Fairbanks?

MRS. JONES: It was very strong. We knew it was important. We knew it was right. And we knew that a lot of people didn't know that. They needed to know it. I guess that's how everyone feels, but we really felt strongly on it.

MR. KAYE: You talked about your disagreement with the kind of biology that previous type that more or less dissected and was reductionist, rather than looking at the whole, the interconnectedness like you described. Is that kind of what your focus is, is larger process in reaction to the more reductionist approach?

MRS. JONES: Right, definitely. Sensing that an ecosystem in order to work has to be enormous. You can't take out an acre and save it and say 'O.K., now we did our part, let's pave over the rest'. You need a huge area. People say 'Oh look at that wasted, empty land, let's use it', but it is doing just what it's supposed to do. It is recycling water and growing plants that feed animals, or are harvested. Hopefully an appropriate amount is harvested. But this gets to the point that I am not sure, I think then, I was saying that man was the one going in and ruining it, as opposed to all of the rest of the biology that is there. Since then, after having lived up north in particular, I have a very different sense about, I would say, the modern civilization as we know it is what has been changing and wrecking things. Man has been a part of the natural balance since the beginning of time. The native people that lived before modern contact literally walked all over every bit of Alaska and the world. They traveled way more than we do today even with all of our modern help. Because they lived of the land and they traveled constantly. They had to. They were just like the animals and had to move and be fluid. They were a piece of the balance that needed to be reckoned with. So, taking man out of the picture; that's how we thought in the conservation circles then. Now, I realize that that is not realistic. Man is a part of the natural balance. It's just how man interacts that is at question. The modern technology and thinking given to man today makes him quite dangerous. Man has always been part of the system.

MR. KAYE: In looking at your testimony here, you offer this variety of reasons, largely based on natural process for protecting this place. But you don't even mention recreation; that it would be a recreational ground. So was your motivation not oriented towards your use, or potential use?

MRS. JONES: Recreation, I guess I didn't then and don't consider recreation like the word is used because my living and my recreation are not distinguishable. I don't go do. I

don't go and take my boat on a trailer and go to a lake and play with it. That's just not in my vocabulary. My boat use was because I needed to go from here to there. My walking, hiking and climbing mountains; that could be recreation, but it didn't feel like that. I didn't use that word. It was more like; "If I am going climbing I am going up there because I am curious". I wanted to go up there, or I wanted to spend my time that day walking. I never thought about it as going to recreate. Most of the time up north in the Kobuk Valley and Coskabu area in northwest Alaska was what we were doing boating around, dog sledding around, or whatever, fishing or flying, it wasn't for recreation. It was because we were living. The wholeness of life; one the health of life, the health of growing good food that feeds us and keeping the air and rivers clean. The health of it and the psychological health, the sanity, the beauty, the peace, the rightness of it the sense of appropriateness and balance that come from the full ecological circle. The ground growing plants that feed the animals that give birth that give food that goes back to the ground. I mean, it's just that we are biology. We forget it, but we are mammalian biology basically. And we are part of the cycle very, very deeply. That's more my sense.

MR. KAYE: Do you think at that time your, I guess, just knowing that a place existed or would be preserved to maintain those qualities was important, just in knowing it's there?

MRS. JONES: I think so. I think that's part of the psychology of it. Knowing that it's there. Knowing that it's working like it's supposed to work. It's a resource, and a treasure. It should be the basis or ground work for everyone, but if we have to put in a museum, draw lines around it and save a piece, I guess it becomes ever so much more important to save it.

MR. KAYE: When you folks established the Alaska Conservation Society it was based largely, I understand, on the notion of setting aside what became the Arctic Refuge; what was it like, that group you were with? Tell me about some of the people, and what you've described as a youthful idealism and enthusiasm that surrounded this proposal.

MRS. JONES: There was a bunch of students and a bunch of teachers, and some other people in the community like Jenny and Celia. There was a lot of intense indignation over wrongs to the precious natural world. There was a lot of sincere in depth talking about understanding the problem, searching for solutions and realizing that we needed the help of a lot more people. And there was a lot of problem solving to figure out how we could help, and what we could do. We needed more people. We needed more consciousness. There was a lot of idealism, for sure.

MR. KAYE: Who were some of the people? You mentioned Jenny and Celia. Who else?

MRS. JONES: Fred Dean, Jerry [unintelligible], Les and Terry Garrett, were the main people who I was associated with. There were more because each of them had their

friends. Joan and Bruce Foote, Keith and I. There were quite a few more students but I can't remember names of other people.

MR. KAYE: Was George Schaller one of those students?

MRS. JONES: I think I was just after George Schaller's time. If he was there in 1959, I wasn't personally really closely acquainted with him.

MR. KAYE: O. K. He was earlier, in the mid 1950's.

MRS. JONES: There was David Klein. I am probably forgetting some obvious people, but those were the people that I most remember, and remember working closely with. We really did some problem solving and it wasn't just, it was many, many lunch sessions, many, many meetings through the years. It gathered energy and it kept growing. The focus of course was the Arctic Wildlife Range, but there were a lot of other issues that we had to deal with.

MR. KAYE: Where did you get your information on the Arctic Range? I mean, was it a movie or books or articles?

MRS. JONES: For me, it was sitting and talking with people who had been there. It was actually quite abstract for me. A slide show perhaps of those gorgeous pictures of it. It was very abstract. I have learned a lot since then. There is a lot more than I was aware of then. My information was mostly from Jenny and Celia. It was all second hand. There was nothing direct.

MR. KAYE: So you didn't need to be there yourself to be motivated, or to be concerned about this place?

MRS. JONES: No, because it was a piece of the wild, natural land that had to be saved. Whether it was that piece, or northwest Alaska where the Project Chariot was going, or anywhere, even anywhere on the globe. But we were really into Alaska at that time. It was what seemed to be most threatened at the moment. It wasn't because it was that area in particular. It was because that was the issue of the moment.

MR. KAYE: So the Arctic Refuge represented a bigger concern, you're saying, that you folks had?

MRS. JONES: Right.

MR. KAYE: Quoting your testimony again, you made the statement, "Our western frontier the last century had a similar situation. Its Bison herds were comparable then to our great Caribou herds of today." Then you kind of go on, talking about the Bison. It's

interesting, the comparison that people make between the Caribou and the Bison. Do you feel that the Caribou became a symbol perhaps of creatures like Bison who had been lost due to these human qualities of civilization that you described earlier?

MRS. JONES: I think so. I think the Caribou and the Wolf have become the symbols of the Arctic's wildness. The Grizzly [has as well]. The Bison were just the only example I could think of, not being familiar with the African herds and situations there might have been some good examples there, but the Bison no less than the Indians themselves could have been.. it was just an example. The interesting thing is what we realized that we at that era, at that year in Alaskan history were fighting some of the issues that were faced a century ago on the Plaines. The education, learning and feedback that had happened in that century gave us a whole new perspective with the same issue up there. In a way, what happened in the history of our country with the clash of the white and Indian cultures, by the time that clash came to northwest Alaska there was a powerful backlash and reevaluating how to do it. It's just like northwest Alaska got off the best of all because before it could be consumed and destroyed like the east coast Indians there was this counter-feeling, this consciousness that had grown out of a century of destroying the land and its people for the new culture. It was just interesting, and this was sort of the tail end of that.

MR. KAYE: Were Bison then, representative of the excesses and the problems of the past that the Caribou symbolized that we could avoid today?

MRS. JONES: Right. Definitely. There seemed to be so many Bison in those days, and there were. It's the same; when you're watching tens of thousands of Caribou, you think, "My goodness, what doesn't it matter what I do to fifty?" And that's the way it goes. It seems like that's part of what's happening. And the feeling then was more of a direct wrong that had to faced, period, for it's own sake. On that line, I often think about the horses standing around, and not being used and being fed. It's almost atoning for the past several centuries of all of the horses that died being overworked. If you are thinking of atoning for the last century's wrongs; that's an example. That could be part, but it was also just in it's own right.

MR. KAYE: A few times, you said, "preserve for it's own sake". Are you suggesting that perhaps this place had intrinsic value beyond how it might serve ecological needs of people or other needs? Would it be a value just in itself?

MRS. JONES: Oh yeah!

MR. KAYE: How so?

MRS. JONES: Just not touch it and let it keep going just being what it is, is immensely valuable. To save, like now, just to save a gene pool that's not manipulated. Then, it

wasn't a consciousness. [An issue] It was just to save an example. Because when we start messing it up, it gets changed so far in two generations, we forget.

MR. KAYE: The last thing in your testimony that I wanted to point out was that you talk about the frontier. I'll quote you, "All too often the apparently endless Alaska frontier will take its place in history along with previous frontiers". You are almost bemoaning the fact that some part of the American frontier might be lost here, and that this place perhaps holds a cultural value. Is that what you might have been thinking?

MRS. JONES: I was always attracted to the native culture. I made a point to really learn it and appreciate it for itself and it's own wisdom. That is still what I am working on. I am watching this frontier, which is where two cultures interact and coincide, watching this frontier sweep across. It's always been sad for me, to see the old ways dissolve. They have a lot of wisdom that we haven't acknowledged or recognized before it's gone. It's gone before we can ….[words unclear as if Mrs. Jones moves away from phone. Sounds like "reap the values of it".]

MR. KAYE: I want to thank you for this interview about the past, Anore. I think we'll move on for a second part here on another tape, and talk a little bit about where you are today in your thinking. Is there anything else you'd like to say about that era, or your involvement at that time?

MRS. JONES: I guess it just struck me that I am still working on that. I wrote on ethno botany book the Eskimo's traditional use of plants in northwest Alaska. Now I am working on one on fish. And I am still fascinated with what is called traditional ecological knowledge now, TEK. I am fascinated with this and appreciating it and bemoaning its loss.